

GARY BANKS,
CHAIRMAN, PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION

DEAR MR BANKS,

RE: PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION ENQUIRY INTO AUSTRALIAN'S GAMING INDUSTRIES

I WRITE IN SEVERAL CAPACITIES, INCLUDING AS PRESIDENT OF A STATE AND COMMONWEALTH FUNDED JAZZ ORGANISATION; AS ITS MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES INDIVIDUALS AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS, I BELIEVE THAT OF ALL ORGANISATIONS IT IS THE MOST BROADLY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NSW JAZZ COMMUNITY. I AM ABLE TO PROVIDE FURTHER DOCUMENTATION FOR THE ARGUMENTS PRESENTED BELOW. REPRESENTATIVES OF MY ORGANISATION ARE AVAILABLE TO AMPLIFY AND DEVELOP ANY OF THE MATTERS RAISED, AND IN PARTICULAR, TO PROVIDE CONSULTATION ON WAYS AND MEANS BY WHICH THE PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED MIGHT BE ADDRESSED.

Summary

THE NUB OF THIS SUBMISSION IS THAT

- NEW SOUTH WALES HAS PLAYED A CENTRAL ROLE IN THE NURTURING OF TRADITIONS OF VARIOUS FORMS OF POPULAR MUSIC THAT HAVE BEEN OF GREAT ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL IMPORTANCE,
- THE SITES AT WHICH THESE MUSICS, THE MUSICIANS, AUDIENCES AND PERFORMANCE PROFICIENCIES HAVE BEEN FOSTERED, ARE IN DECLINE,
- THERE ARE MANY REASONS FOR THIS DECLINE, BUT CHIEF AMONG THESE IS THE CHANGING PLACE OF GAMBLING WITHIN THE STATE'S RECREATIONAL PROFILE.

Submission

THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE ENQUIRY INCLUDE THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPACT OF THE GAMING INDUSTRIES, INCLUDING ON "THE RETAIL, TOURISM AND ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRIES". I WRITE WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THESE. IN PARTICULAR I WISH TO RAISE THE QUESTION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NEW GAMING LEGISLATION AND THE TRADITIONS OF LIVE POPULAR MUSIC IN NEW SOUTH WALES.

1. Popular musics, including jazz, in Sydney

1.1 Quantitative measures

1.1.1 Jazz:

BECAUSE RESOURCED RESEARCH INTO THE JAZZ SECTOR HAS NOT BEEN FOCUSED, IT IS NECESSARY TO EXTRAPOLATE FROM A RANGE OF SURVEYS CONDUCTED AT DIFFERENT TIMES:

- THE 1986 NATIONAL CENSUS IDENTIFIED 6,081 MUSICIANS AND COMPOSERS, BUT NOT INCLUDING PERSONS WHOSE MUSICAL ACTIVITY IS NOT THEIR MAIN JOB, MEANING THAT THIS FIGURE EXCLUDES A LARGE NUMBER OF JAZZ MUSICIANS.¹
- THE 1991 CENSUS IDENTIFIED 785 SINGERS IN THE POPULAR FIELD, WHICH INCLUDED JAZZ, AND 5,168 INSTRUMENTAL MUSICIANS, A NATIONAL TOTAL OF 5,953.²
- A 1991 NATIONAL SURVEY WHICH DID NOT INCLUDE 'POPULAR' - ROCK, JAZZ ETC. - IDENTIFIED 5,253 PERFORMERS WORKING IN SYMPHONY/CHAMBER/CHORAL GROUPS. THESE FIGURES INCLUDED FULLTIME, PERMANENT PARTTIME AND NON PERMANENT EMPLOYMENT.
- THE SAME SURVEY IDENTIFIED 172 ORGANISATIONS FOR THE PRESENTATION OF SYMPHONY/CHAMBER/CHORAL MUSIC.³

HOW MUCH MUSIC DO THESE PERFORMERS PRODUCE, AND HOW MUCH OF IT IS JAZZ? A NATIONAL SURVEY COVERING THE 12 MONTHS ENDING MARCH 1993 GATHERED FIGURES FOR THE TOTAL "NUMBER OF INVOLVEMENTS" AS A PERFORMER BEFORE A LIVE AUDIENCE, INCLUDING CONDUCTING AND SINGING. PAID 'INVOLVEMENTS' CAME TO 16,500, PLUS 142,700 UNPAID, AND 39,400 'PAID AND UNPAID'.⁴ APART FROM BENEFIT CONCERTS FOR CHARITIES OR INCAPACITATED COLLEAGUES, VERY FEW JAZZ GIGS ARE UNPAID, SO THAT THE GENERAL PROFILE OF JAZZ EMPLOYMENT BEARS ALMOST NO RELATION TO THE LARGER PICTURE SURVEYED HERE. THERE ARE OBVIOUSLY DOZENS OF WAYS IN WHICH THESE FIGURES CAN BE MARSHALLED. WITHOUT EXTRAPOLATING TOO EXTRAVAGANTLY, HOWEVER, WE COULD DRAW ATTENTION TO THE FOLLOWING:

- THERE WERE 198,600 INDIVIDUAL INVOLVEMENTS IN MUSIC IN THE SURVEY YEAR.
- 152,000 CORRESPOND TO THE PERIODS OF ACTIVITY CHARACTERISTIC OF JAZZ EMPLOYMENT, (3 TO 20 HOURS PER WEEK, SPREAD ACROSS THE WHOLE YEAR), THOUGH THIS FIGURE INCLUDED AN ENORMOUS NUMBER OF UNPAID ENGAGEMENTS, WHICH IS UNCHARACTERISTIC OF JAZZ.
- THERE WERE 16,500 OF THE MORE JAZZ-TYPICAL *paid* ENGAGEMENTS, AND OF THESE, AROUND 12,500 CORRESPOND TO THE PERIODS OF ACTIVITY CHARACTERISTIC OF JAZZ EMPLOYMENT.

¹ *The Arts: Some Australian Data* (AUSTRALIA COUNCIL, 4TH ED. 1991) PP.34-5. HEREAFTER TASAD

² AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS (ABS), *Employment in Selected Culture/Leisure Occupations, Australia, August 1991*, ABS CATALOGUE No. 6273.0

³ ABS, *Music and Performing Arts in Australia 1991*, ABS CATALOGUE No.4116.0

⁴ ABS, *Work in Selected Culture/Leisure Activities, Australia March 1993*, ABS CATALOGUE No. 6281.0

HOW MANY PEOPLE 'CONSUME' THESE LIVE PERFORMANCES, HOW MANY PEOPLE'S NEEDS DO THEY SERVE?

A SURVEY CARRIED OUT OVER A GIVEN MONTH IN 1991 PRODUCED FIGURES FOR 28 DIFFERENT LEISURE ACTIVITIES. THE FOLLOWING ARE ACTIVITIES THAT COULD INCLUDE THE EXPERIENCE OF LIVE JAZZ PERFORMANCE:

DINING, EATING OUT 57%
 SOCIALISING, PUBS, HOTELS 24%
 DANCING, GOING TO A DISCO 14%
 POPULAR MUSIC CONCERTS 6%
 LIVE THEATRE AND DANCE 5%
 ATTENDING OTHER LIVE PERFORMANCES 3%

IT IS ALSO OF INTEREST THAT THE LEAST POPULAR LEISURE ACTIVITIES LISTED WERE:

CLASSICAL MUSIC RECITAL, OPERA 2%
 PARTICIPATION IN THEATRE, MUSIC, DANCE 2%⁵

A FURTHER SURVEY COVERING THE 12 MONTHS ENDING JUNE 1991 GIVES US MORE INFORMATION ON 'CONSUMPTION' OF MUSIC, IN THE FORM OF ATTENDANCE AT CULTURAL VENUES.⁶ TWO OF THE CATEGORIES ARE OF PARTICULAR RELEVANCE HERE, AND ARE DEFINED IN THE SURVEY AS FOLLOWS:

POPULAR MUSIC CONCERTS - INCLUDE BRASS AND CONCERT BANDS, COUNTRY & WESTERN, ETHNIC AND MULTI-CULTURAL, FOLK, JAZZ, POPULAR AND ROCK BANDS, GROUPS, MUSICIANS/VOCALISTS; IN ALMOST ANY VENUES INCLUDING HOTELS AND CLUBS, BUT NOT INCLUDING STREET PERFORMANCES. 3,456,400 PEOPLE HAD ATTENDED THESE DURING THE PERIOD, A NATIONAL PARTICIPATION RATE OF 28.5%. THIS WAS THE THIRD HIGHEST ATTENDED CATEGORY OF CULTURAL VENUE, AND THE HIGHEST FOR PEOPLE WITH FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT.

CLASSICAL MUSIC CONCERTS - SYMPHONY, PHILHARMONIC & YOUTH ORCHESTRAS, CHAMBER MUSIC, CHORAL, SOLO RECITALS; EXCLUDED ARE OPERA, MILITARY AND SALVATION ARMY BANDS, VARIETY AND CABARET. THESE WERE THE LEAST WELL ATTENDED OF ALL VENUES; NATIONWIDE, A TOTAL OF 985,900 ATTENDANCES, A PARTICIPATION RATE OF 8.2%. IT IS IMPORTANT TO LINK THIS WITH ANOTHER STATISTIC FROM ABS, *Cultural Trends in Australia No. 1: A Statistical Overview*, ABS CATALOGUE No.4172.0, P.50): AMONG PEOPLE SURVEYED AS TO WHY THEY DID NOT ATTEND CLASSICAL MUSIC CONCERTS, 83.1% REPORTED THAT THERE WAS 'NO BARRIER' PREVENTING THEM FROM DOING SO.

LET US TRY TO ASSEMBLE SOME FIGURES SPECIFICALLY RELATING TO JAZZ PERFORMANCE COMPARED WITH THE FIGURES PRESENTED ABOVE. IN 1983, AMONG A GROUP OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSICIANS AND CONDUCTORS SURVEYED, WHEN ASKED WHICH CATEGORIES OF MUSIC THEY WERE ENGAGED IN, THE FOLLOWING FIGURES EMERGED:

JAZZ PERFORMANCE 18%
 ORCHESTRAL 19%
 CHAMBER/SMALL ENSEMBLE 2%

⁵ TASAD PP.20-21

⁶ ABS, *Attendance at Selected Cultural Venues, Australia, June 1991*, ABS CATALOGUE No. 4114.0.

CLASSICAL SOLOISTS 3%

CONDUCTORS 4%

OTHER CATEGORIES INCLUDED: POPULAR (27%), ROCK (8%), FOLK (7%).⁷

- IN GULDBERG'S STUDY COVERING 1983-6, IT WAS ESTIMATED THAT THERE WERE 448 FULLTIME AND 2,217 PARTTIME JAZZ MUSICIANS IN AUSTRALIA, A TOTAL OF 2,665.⁸

- THE *Australian Jazz Directory* LISTS AROUND 750 BANDS, A FIGURE WHICH HAS TO BE TREATED WITH GREAT CAUTION, HOWEVER.⁹ MANY OF THOSE BANDS WILL NOT NECESSARILY BE WORKING REGULARLY. ON THE OTHER HAND, THIS LISTING DOES NOT INCLUDE THE SCORES OF PICKUP GROUPS WHICH ARE PUT TOGETHER EVERY WEEK THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY FOR ONE-OFF GIGS.

- THE AJD LISTS ABOUT 65 CLUBS AND SOCIETIES DEVOTED TO THE PRESENTATION OF JAZZ, PLUS OVER 90 ANNUAL JAZZ FESTIVALS AND AROUND 300 JAZZ VENUES THROUGHOUT AUSTRALIA. (THE AUSTRALIA COUNCIL'S *Arts Research Paper* NO 13, JANUARY 1995, GIVES A FIGURE OF 28 JAZZ FESTIVALS, BUT EVEN THIS ACCOUNTS FOR NEARLY HALF THE AUSTRALIAN MUSIC FESTIVALS IT LISTS.)

- IN 1985 GULDBERG ESTIMATED THAT THERE WERE 17,800 JAZZ PERFORMANCES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY (PP.198-9). MORE UP TO DATE FIGURES ARE AVAILABLE, THOUGH THEY ARE ONLY FOR SYDNEY. MCCONNELL HAS ANALYSED REGULAR BAND LISTINGS IN 3 PUBLICATIONS OVER THE PERIOD 1985-1992, THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE OF WHICH WERE THOSE PUBLISHED BY THE JAZZ ACTION SOCIETY OF NSW IN THEIR *Newsletter*. THE NUMBER OF GIGS IN SYDNEY EACH WEEK OVER THAT PERIOD RANGES FROM 87 (IN 1987 AND 1992) TO 109 (IN 1988).¹⁰ THESE DO NOT INCLUDE THE GIGS WHICH COME AND GO ON THE BASIS OF WORD OF MOUTH, WITHOUT ANY PRINTED NOTICE. MY OWN GIG DIARIES SUGGEST THAT 30% OF MY WORK CONSISTS OF ENGAGEMENTS NOT LISTED IN THE PUBLISHED GUIDES.

THE SOURCES USED BY MCCONNELL DO NOT OFTEN INDICATE HOW MANY MUSICIANS ARE IN EACH BAND, WHICH COULD BE ANYTHING FROM A SOLOIST TO A 16 PIECE. THE MOST USUAL SIZE FOR SYDNEY JAZZ BANDS RANGES FROM QUARTET TO SEXTET, SO THAT IT WOULD NOT BE UNREASONABLE TO TAKE A QUINTET AS THE MEDIAN. IF WE ARE TRYING TO FORM AN ESTIMATE OF THE NUMBER OF "INVOLVEMENTS IN MUSIC" IN THE SENSE USED IN ABS.6281.0 ABOVE, THEN WE MULTIPLY MCCONNELL'S FIGURES BY 5, GIVING US A RANGE FROM 22,620 FOR THE YEARS 1985 AND 1992, TO 28,340 FOR 1988. IF WE GO ONE STEP FURTHER AND IMAGINE, CONSERVATIVELY, THAT THESE LISTED GIGS OR INVOLVEMENTS AMOUNT TO ONLY 70% OF THE TOTAL (BECAUSE OF EXTRA UNLISTED GIGS), THEN WE ARRIVE AT 32,314 INVOLVEMENTS IN 1985

⁷ *The Artist in Australia Today - Report of the Committee for the Individual Artists Inquiry* (AUSTRALIA COUNCIL, NORTH SYDNEY, 1983), P.11.

⁸ HANS GULDBERG, *The Australian Music Industry: an economic evaluation* (AUSTRALIA COUNCIL, NORTH SYDNEY, 1987), PP. 198-9.

⁹ ERIC MYERS, ED., *Australian Jazz Directory* (JAZZ CO-ORDINATION ASSOCIATION OF NSW,, MILLERS POINT, NSW, 1994), PP.36-93. HEREAFTER *AJD*.

¹⁰ KERRY MCCONNELL, *Jazz It Up: The Resurgence of Jazz in Sydney* (UNPUBLISHED RESEARCH PAPER, FOR THE SCHOOL OF LEISURE AND TOURISM STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, SYDNEY, NOVEMBER 1993), APPENDIX 1.

AND 1992, UP TO 40,486 IN 1988, JUST FOR THE SYDNEY METROPOLITAN AREA.

THERE IS OBVIOUSLY A HIGH LEVEL OF CONJECTURE HERE, YET OTHER DATA TEND TO SUPPORT THE OVERALL SCALE. GULDBERG ESTIMATED THAT IN 1985 THE NUMBER OF JAZZ EVENTS PER MONTH IN NSW/ACT WAS 545, AND 1,033 NATIONALLY (PP198-9). MULTIPLIED BY 12 FOR THE YEAR WE HAVE 6540 AND 12,396 RESPECTIVELY. IF WE APPLY THE QUINTET FORMAT TO THESE FIGURES, THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL INVOLVEMENTS IN NSW/ACT COMES TO 32,700. GIVEN THE HIGH CONCENTRATION IN SYDNEY OF THE WHOLE OF NSW/ACT JAZZ ACTIVITY, THE ESTIMATE I AM MAKING, OF IN EXCESS OF 30,000 INDIVIDUAL GIG INVOLVEMENTS IN SYDNEY FOR THE YEARS 1985 AND 1992 IS FAR FROM OUTRAGEOUS. USING GULDBERG'S RATIO ABOVE FOR THE AMOUNT OF PERFORMANCE IN NSW/ACT COMPARED TO THE NATIONAL FIGURE (545:1,033), WE COULD NOT UNREASONABLY PROPOSE THAT THE TOTAL NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL JAZZ GIG INVOLVEMENTS THROUGHOUT AUSTRALIA IN 1992 WAS IN EXCESS OF 51,000.

WHEN WE COME TO ASSESS THE LEVEL OF 'CONSUMPTION' OF JAZZ ON PERFORMANCE, WE ARE AGAIN HAMPERED BY THE LACK OF FOCUSED RESEARCH. GULDBERG ESTIMATED THAT THE NATIONAL AUDIENCE FOR LIVE JAZZ PERFORMANCE IN 1985 WAS 2.4 MILLION (PP198-9). A SURVEY WHICH I AM CURRENTLY CONDUCTING OF AUSTRALIAN JAZZ CLUBS AND SOCIETIES GIVES A GLIMPSE OF ONE SMALL SECTOR OF JAZZ ACTIVITY. AMONG THE 50% WHICH HAVE RESPONDED AT THE TIME OF WRITING, TOTAL MEMBERSHIP OF THESE CLUBS WAS 5039 (AND, INCIDENTALLY, EMPLOYING 3,000 MUSICIANS DURING THEIR MOST RECENT FINANCIAL YEAR). BUT APART FROM THE FACT THAT THESE JAZZ CLUB FIGURES ARE INCOMPLETE, THERE ARE OTHER PROBLEMS WITH THEM AS A BASIS OF COMPARISON WITH CLASSICAL MUSIC CONSUMPTION. THE CHARACTER OF THESE JAZZ ORGANISATIONS IS EXTREMELY MIXED, AND IN ANY CASE JAZZ CLUB REPRESENTATIVES CONSISTENTLY REPORT THAT THERE IS NO PREDICTABLE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN CLUB MEMBERSHIP AND AUDIENCES FOR CLUB CONCERTS.

MORE GENERALLY, ATTEMPTS TO FORM ASSESSMENTS OF ANY GIVEN CULTURAL ACTIVITY ON THE BASIS OF MAGNITUDE, CAN VERY EASILY PROVIDE US WITH THE ANSWERS WE WANT. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO MAKE PRECISE COMPARISONS BETWEEN DIFFERENT CULTURAL ACTIVITIES ON THE BASIS OF IDENTICAL CATEGORIES BECAUSE THE CONDITIONS OF PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION ARE SO DISSIMILAR. FOR EXAMPLE, CALCULATION OF REVENUE GENERATED ON THE BASIS OF PAID ATTENDANCE IS OBVIOUSLY INAPPLICABLE TO THE CONDITIONS IN WHICH MOST JAZZ IS PERFORMED. FOR THIS REASON, IT IS SPECIOUS TO DO MUCH MORE THAN POINT TO ESTIMATES OF THE RELATIVE SCALES OF ACTIVITY. AT THE VERY LEAST HOWEVER, IT IS BEYOND DISPUTE THAT, AS ERIC MYERS HAS SUBMITTED, THE NUMBERS OF MUSICIANS AND THE SIZES OF THE AUDIENCES FOR JAZZ AND CLASSICAL MUSIC ARE COMPARABLE.¹¹

1.1.2. OTHER POPULAR MUSICS.

¹¹ *Jazzchord* 17 (JAN/FEB 1994), P.6.

I PROVIDE THE FOREGOING IN SUCH EXTENSIVE DETAIL PARTLY BECAUSE THE JAZZ SECTOR IS MOST CENTRAL TO MY PARTICULAR INTERESTS AS AN ADMINISTRATOR AND RESEARCHER, AND ALSO BECAUSE THE DATA ON WHICH I MAKE MY EXTRAPOLATIONS ARE DISPERSED SO WIDELY.

I MAY BE MUCH MORE BRIEF IN SIGNALLING THE QUANTITATIVE IMPORTANCE OF MORE 'COMMERCIAL' FORMS OF POPULAR MUSIC PERFORMANCE, PARTLY BECAUSE FIGURES ARE BOTH MORE ACCESSIBLE, AND PERHAPS LESS SURPRISING (SEE FOR EXAMPLE THE ABS PUBLICATIONS LISTED ABOVE, NUMEROUS STUDIES OF THE AUSTRALIAN POP SCENE, AND MOST RECENTLY, THE STUDY *Headbanging or Dancing? Youth and Music in Australia*, AND THE DOCTORAL RESEARCH CONDUCTED BY SHANE HOMAN AT MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY, EMBODIED IN HIS THESIS, *The Mayor's a Square: A Regulatory History of Sydney Rock Venues, 1957-1997*.^{1 2} THESE LAST TWO DOCUMENTS ARE SO FAR-RANGING, IT IS GRATUITOUS TO DO MUCH MORE THAN REFER TO THEM AS FULLY DOCUMENTED ARGUMENTS FOR THE IMPORTANCE OF LIVE POP MUSIC PERFORMANCE IN AUSTRALIA AND IN SYDNEY IN PARTICULAR. HOMAN, FOR EXAMPLE, CITES 1993 STATISTICS THAT ASSIGNED AN ANNUAL VALUE OF \$697.6 MILLION COMING FROM THE CONTEMPORARY MUSIC INDUSTRY INTO GDP, OF WHICH \$212 MILLION CAME FROM LIVE PERFORMANCE.

1.2 Qualitative Measures

AMONG OUR VARIOUS ART FORMS, IT IS AMPLY DOCUMENTED THAT THE VARIOUS FORMS OF AUSTRALIAN POPULAR MUSICS HAVE ACHIEVED THE MOST DURABLE ACCLAIM AND INFLUENCE INTERNATIONALLY. AUSTRALIAN JAZZ SINCE THE FORTIES AND ROCK SINCE THE SEVENTIES, HAVE BEEN MAJOR CULTURAL EXPORTS, AND IN THE CASE OF ROCK, A MAJOR ECONOMIC EXPORT. THE INNER CITY PUB HAS PLAYED THE CENTRAL ROLE IN INCUBATING THESE MUSICS, THE PERFORMANCE SKILLS OF ITS PRACTITIONERS, AND THE COMMUNITY OF AUDIENCES.

APART FROM THE INTERNATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE POPULAR MUSIC PHENOMENA, THEY ARE CRUCIAL IN CONSTRUCTING LOCAL COMMUNITY NETWORKS THAT CUT ACROSS OTHER DIVISIONS IN OUR SOCIETY - PROFESSIONAL, ETHNIC, GEOGRAPHICAL, CLASS. AT ANY TIME IN THE LIFE OF A COMMUNITY, THE EXPERIENCE OF LOCALLY GENERATED LIVE MUSIC IS REGARDED AS VITAL TO CULTURAL AND COLLECTIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL WELFARE. THIS IS MOST PARTICULARLY SO IN AN URBAN ENVIRONMENT WHERE DIVISIVE ANONYMITY AND ALIENATION ARE PREVAILING MODES OF EXPERIENCE. I PURSUE THE 'CULTURAL WELFARE' DIMENSIONS OF THIS ISSUE FURTHER BELOW.

2. The decline in live music performance opportunities

WE BEGAN TO EXPLORE THIS SITUATION IN THE FIRST INSTANCE IN RESPONSE TO REPORTS COMING INTO THE OFFICE OF THE NSW JAZZ CO-ORDINATOR TO THE EFFECT THAT JAZZ MUSICIANS WERE EXPERIENCING A SERIOUS CONTRACTION OF

^{1 2} GILLIAN RAMSAY, *Headbanging or Dancing? Youth and Music in Australia*, PART 2 (SYDNEY, AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING AUTHORITY, 1998); SHANE HOMAN, *The Mayor's a Square : A Regulatory History of Sydney Rock Venues, 1957-1997*. PHD DISSERTATION, MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY, 1998

WORK OPPORTUNITIES OVER THE LAST YEAR OR SO. WE FIRST CALLED FOR FURTHER INFORMATION FROM THE JAZZ COMMUNITY, THEN INITIATED AN INDUSTRY WIDE SURVEY THROUGH THE NSW MUSICIANS' UNION. RESULTS TO DATE:

2.1. FEEDBACK FROM MUSICIANS PROVIDED TO JAZZ CO-ORDINATION ASSOCIATION SUGGESTS THAT AROUND 30 JAZZ MUSICIANS AND BANDEADERS HAVE EXPERIENCED A MEDIAN LOSS OF EMPLOYMENT OF 50% (SEE ATTACHMENT TO LETTER TO PREMIER, NOVEMBER 1998)

2.2. INDUSTRY SURVEY, CIRCULATED THROUGH MUSICIANS UNION (NSW) AT REQUEST OF JCA.

MEMBERSHIP ON BOOKS, TO WHOM THE SURVEY WAS CIRCULATED WITH DUES INVOICES: 1564

HOWEVER ONLY AROUND 780 OF THESE ARE CONSIDERED TO BE OF FINANCIAL STANDING (IE, THE OTHERS ARE MEMBERS WHOSE DUES ARE SO FAR IN ARREARS AS TO BE PRESUMED LAPSED).

108 COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRES SO FAR RETURNED, A RESPONSE RATE OF ABOUT 1 IN 7, WHICH IS RELATIVELY HIGH FOR A SURVEY OF THIS KIND.

THE DATA NEED CAREFUL ANALYSIS AND CROSS-REFERENCING, BUT SOME PRELIMINARY EXTRAPOLATIONS CAN BE MADE WHICH ARE GERMANE TO OUR CONCERNS:

33% (GROUP A) REPORTED NO CHANGE, AND 67% (GROUP B) REPORTED A REDUCTION IN PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES AND INCOME OVER THE LAST 12 MONTHS. IN ADDITION, GROUP A INCLUDED 3 MUSICIANS WHO WERE RETIRED OR INACTIVE, AND ONLY 2 IN GROUP B.

THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY - OVER 90% - WERE MUSICIANS IN THE POPULAR MUSIC FIELD - IE, POP, ROCK, COUNTRY, BLUES, JAZZ - WHICH IS SIGNIFICANTLY SUSTAINED BY PUB ACTIVITY. IT IS NOTABLE THAT WHILE 5 EXCLUSIVELY CLASSICAL MUSICIANS SUFFERED NO LOSS, ONLY ONE EXCLUSIVELY CLASSICAL MUSICIAN WAS IN GROUP B (IE, WORK REDUCTION). THIS FURTHER SUGGESTS THAT THE MOST SERIOUS ATTENUATION OF MUSICAL ACTIVITY IS IN NON-CLASSICAL VENUES SUCH AS PUBS.

THE RATIO OF PROFESSIONAL TO NON-PROFESSIONAL WAS AROUND 60-70%, WITH GROUP B HAVING THE HIGHER PROPORTION. THAT IS, IT APPEARS THAT A HIGHER PROPORTION OF PROFESSIONAL MUSICIANS (MUSICIANS WHO HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE INCOME EXCEPT THE DOLE OR CASUAL LABOUR THAT DEPRIVES SOMEONE ELSE OF EMPLOYMENT) HAVE SUFFERED WORK LOSS THAN SEMI-PROFESSIONALS.

MOST MUSICIANS IN THE POPULAR FIELD INCLUDED JAZZ AS ONE OF THEIR PERFORMANCE STYLES, BUT A TOTAL OF 16 IN GROUP B AND ONLY 3 IN GROUP A NOMINATED JAZZ AS THE PRIMARY OR SOLE STYLE. THAT IS, WHILE AROUND 2/3 OF ALL POPULAR MUSICIANS HAVE SUFFERED LOSS OF WORK, THE JAZZ SECTOR APPEARS TO BE DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECTED.

3. Factors contributing to the decline.

AMONG GROUP B - THAT IS, THOSE WHO HAD EXPERIENCED LOSS OF WORK OVER THE LAST YEAR - THE REASONS GIVEN WERE WIDE RANGING. FREQUENTLY CITED FACTORS WERE SUCH ISSUES AS: THE USE OF PIPED MUSIC, OF SYNTHESISERS, OF TAPED BACKING IN SHOWS, KARAOKE IN PUBS, THE DJ DANCE SCENE, PRICE UNDERCUTTING. AGENCY PRACTICES WERE ALSO NOMINATED; AGENTS WERE FREQUENTLY MENTIONED AS EXERCISING DICTATORIAL CONTROL OVER THE INDUSTRY, FREQUENTLY IN WAYS THAT VIOLATED AWARD RATES, AND THAT TO RESIST THEM WAS TO COMMIT PROFESSIONAL SUICIDE.

BUT ABOVE ALL THE SURVEYS ALSO APPEAR TO REINFORCE NUMEROUS PRESS REPORTS ON THE IMPACT OF POKIES. IT WAS RECENTLY REPORTED IN *The Australian* THAT BRISBANE'S ROCK SCENE IS OVERTAKING SYDNEY'S BECAUSE OF THE INVASION OF POKIES IN SYDNEY'S PUBS. IN THE JCA-INITIATED SURVEYS THE BIGGEST SINGLE FACTOR NOMINATED IN LOSS OF EMPLOYMENT WAS THE INSTALLATION OF GAMBLING FACILITIES. IN GENERAL, THERE WAS A PERCEPTION THAT LIVE MUSIC PERFORMANCE IN SYDNEY WAS DISAPPEARING - A MAJORITY VIEW OVERALL. THIS PERCEPTION IS REINFORCED BY THE SURVEY DATA PROVIDED IN RAMSAY 1998, OF WHICH THE FOLLOWING QUOTED COMMENT IS REPRESENTATIVE: "SYDNEY HAS JUST DECIDED THAT IT'S NOT WORTHWHILE ECONOMICALLY I RECKON AND THEY'RE JUST CLOSING DOWN ALL THE VENUES" (P.100)

IN PARTICULAR, IN GROUP B (IE, LOSS OF WORK), 36% OF RESPONDENTS NOMINATED THE INSTALLATION OF GAMBLING FACILITIES AS A FACTOR IN THE LOSS OF EMPLOYMENT. THE QUESTION WHICH ASKED IF THE MUSICIAN WAS AWARE OF BANDS REPLACED BY POKER MACHINES BROUGHT AN AFFIRMATIVE ANSWER FROM AROUND 33 RESPONDENTS (SOMETIMES THE RESPONSE WAS AMBIGUOUS), AND INTERESTINGLY THIS INCLUDED ABOUT 9 MUSICIANS WHOSE EMPLOYMENT HAD NOT BEEN REDUCED (GROUP A). THAT IS, THE PERCEPTION IS WIDESPREAD THAT GAMBLING IS HAVING A DELETERIOUS EFFECT ON MUSICIANS.

ALTHOUGH THE PUBS ARE THE PRIMARY SITE OF SYDNEY'S MUSICAL ATTRITION, IT IS A COMPLEX WEB OF CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH CONTRIBUTES TO THE CHANGES. THE PUBS THEMSELVES ARE SQUEEZED BETWEEN THE BIG MULTIPLEX CLUBS ON THE ONE HAND, AND RESTAURANTS WHICH NOW BENEFIT FROM LIBERALISED DRINKING LEGISLATION. THE PUB'S FIRST RESPONSIBILITY IS TO SURVIVE - AND IF IT DOESN'T, IT CERTAINLY CAN'T BECOME A VENUE FOR ANYTHING. AN IRONIC FACTOR IN THE DECLINE OF PUB MUSIC IS ALSO INNER CITY GENTRIFICATION, FREQUENTLY DRIVEN BY PEOPLE WHOSE OWN YOUTH, WHOSE SENSE OF SELF AND CIVILISATION WAS LARGELY SHAPED BY THE KINDS OF LEISURE SITE THAT, IN COMFORTABLE MIDDLE AGE THEY NOW SEEK TO SUPPRESS.

BUREAUCRATIC INERTIA ALSO WORKS AGAINST LIVE MUSIC. THIS PROBLEM SEEMS TO AGGRAVATED BY THE CONDITIONS WHICH APPLY TO THE AWARD OF LIVE ENTERTAINMENT LICENSES, AND WHICH APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN APPLIED WITH MORE RIGOUR OR AT LEAST LESS TRANSPARENCY OVER THE LAST YEAR. RESPONSIBILITY FOR ENTERTAINMENT LICENSES WAS DEVOLVED TO LOCAL

COUNCILS A DECADE AGO, PRODUCING CONFUSED ENCOUNTERS BETWEEN POLICY AND POLICING WHICH MAKE IT ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO CLARIFY THE PATH TO A SUCCESSFUL APPLICATION OR REVOCATION OF CLOSURE. ATTEMPTS TO FOLLOW THE BUREAUCRATIC TRAIL BEHIND THE TERMINATION OF MUSIC IN ONE WELL-ESTABLISHED JAZZ AND ROCK PUB. SCORES OF PHONE CALLS ONLY LED FURTHER INTO A LABYRINTH OF BUCK-PASSING, ANECDOTE, RUMOUR, AND MISINFORMATION. THE REGULATIONS WHICH FRAME LIVE ENTERTAINMENT ARE THEMSELVES A TANGLE OF CONTRADICTIONS. A PUB VENUE FILLED WITH PATRONS WATCHING A SPORTING EVENT ON TV IS IN BREACH OF ITS LICENCE IF THE TV IS TURNED OFF AND A BAND BEGINS TO PERFORM BEFORE THE SAME CROWD, OR EVEN SMALLER. HOMAN NOTES THE ALICE IN WONDERLAND SEMANTICS OF SUCH REGULATIONS. LIQUOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT DECLARE THAT POKER MACHINES ARE NOT A FORM OF ENTERTAINMENT, BUT MUSIC IS. YET GOVERNMENT STATISTICS ON PUBS, TAVERNS AND BARS IN 1996 OMITTED LIVE ENTERTAINMENT AS A REVENUE SOURCE, BUT LISTED POKER MACHINES. IT IS LITTLE WONDER THAT THE ENFORCEMENT OF CONDITIONS GOVERNING LIVE ENTERTAINMENT MAY BE EUPHEMISTICALLY DESCRIBED AS WHIMSICAL. WITHOUT WISHING TO ENTER THE TERRAIN OF CONSPIRACY THEORY, THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT RAISING THE BAR FOR ENTERTAINMENT LICENCE APPLICATIONS AND COMPLIANCE IS LIKELY TO SERVE THE INTERESTS OF THE GAMING LOBBY. IT IS HARDLY SURPRISING THAT THE STARK ECONOMIC SIMPLICITY OF POKIES SHOULD BE ATTRACTIVE TO A PUBLICAN DROWNING UNDER A TIDE OF NEW RECREATIONAL LEGISLATIONS.

4. Implications - the cost

ECONOMIC AND OTHER QUANTIFICATIONS ARE ELOQUENT IN THEMSELVES, BUT THEY DO NOT DISCLOSE THE FURTHER CONTRIBUTION WHICH LIVE MUSIC MAKES TO THE QUALITY OF LIFE AND THE PROJECTION INTERNATIONALLY OF THE CITY'S IDENTITY. LIVE MUSIC IS ESSENTIAL IN THE THERAPEUTIC ARTICULATION OF COMMUNITIES, WHETHER DEFINED BY STYLISTIC PREFERENCE (JAZZ, ROCK, COUNTRY), ETHNICITY, CLASS, AGE. HOW MANY OF THESE SOCIAL BENEFITS ARE ACHIEVED BY ROOMS OCCUPIED BY ATOMISED INDIVIDUALS INTERFACING SILENTLY WITH MACHINES THAT IMPOVERISH THEM - REMEMBER, THAT IS THEIR FUNCTION - AND GIVE NOTHING BACK IN TERMS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF MANUAL OR INTELLECTUAL SKILLS, SOCIALISATION OR COMMUNICATION COMPETENCIES?

CONSIDER, AS AN ISSUE CURRENTLY IN THE MORAL PANIC SPOTLIGHT: WHERE DOES YOUTH GO TO DEFINE ITSELF IN WAYS THAT ARE NECESSARILY OPPOSITIONAL YET WHICH CAN BE ACCOMMODATED BY THEIR OWN COMMUNITY. SINCE THE EARLY SIXTIES THE LIVE MUSIC PUB, ALTHOUGH OFTEN CASTIGATED AS A SITE OF ANTI-SOCIAL YOUTH BEHAVIOUR BY, YET IT FOCUSSED AND CONTAINED THAT BEHAVIOUR. DOES THE COMMUNITY PREFER THIS ACTIVITY DISPERSED INTO THE OPEN SPACES OF STREETS OR SPACES WHICH ARE NOT SET UP TO ACCOMMODATE SUCH ENERGIES AT ALL? ONE INTERVIEWEE IN RAMSAY 1998 COMMENTED ON THE NEED FOR LIVE PARTICIPATION MUSIC VENUES - THEY CAN'T BE ORGANISED AT HOME BECAUSE THEY "WOULD GET OUT OF CONTROL" (P. 98) NOR DOES IT MAKE ANY SENSE THAT WHILE GOVERNMENT YOUTH EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES INCLUDE AN UNPRECEDENTED EXPANSION OF MUSIC TRAINING PROGRAMMES, THE SAME GOVERNMENTS PURSUE POLICIES THAT

DEPRIVE YOUTH OF THE OPPORTUNITIES TO USE THAT TRAINING, TO CHANNEL THOSE SKILLS BACK INTO THE COMMUNITY THROUGH LIVE PERFORMANCE.

THE PROBLEM GOES BEYOND THE DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED BY THE JAZZ COMMUNITY, HOWEVER, AND EVEN BEYOND THE POPULAR MUSIC COMMUNITY IN GENERAL. AS THE CITY APPROACHES THE OLYMPICS, THE ARGUMENTS FOR THE RETENTION OF POPULAR MUSIC VENUES ARE REINFORCED BY QUESTIONS OF ECONOMICS AND INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION. THE CITY WILL SOON BE INUNDATED BY RECORD NUMBERS OF TOURISTS. LOCAL ENTERTAINMENT VENUES WILL BE CRUCIAL SITES AT WHICH THE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER OF SYDNEY WILL BE PROCLAIMED, AND PROMINENT AMONG THESE ARE THOSE CITY PUBS WHOSE ARCHITECTURAL AND CULTURAL ETHOS IS AS UNIQUE TO THIS CITY AS SUCH COUNTERPARTS AS 'THE DUBLIN PUB', 'THE NEW YORK BAR AND GRILL', 'THE PARISIAN CAFÉ'. IT IS HOPED THAT THE OLYMPICS WILL ADVERTISE THE CITY AS A TOURIST DESTINATION. IS IT PART OF THE IMAGE SYDNEY WISHES TO PROJECT THAT ITS ONLY PUB RECREATION IS GAMBLING? LOCAL MUSIC IS A VIBRANT PRESENCE IN THE WORLD'S GREAT CITIES. ON PRESENT TRENDS, SYDNEY WILL SOON HAVE NONE.

THE CHANGES I HAVE DOCUMENTED REPRESENT A SIGNIFICANT SHIFT IN THE CHARACTER OF RECREATIONAL LIFE IN SYDNEY. EXPRESSED IN THE SIMPLEST TERMS, ON PRESENT TRENDS, SYDNEY WILL ENTER THE NEXT CENTURY WITH NO LOCALLY AND GRASS-ROOTS GENERATED MUSIC AS A RECREATIONAL OPTION.

I WRITE IN THE FIRST INSTANCE AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE INTERESTS OF OUR PRIMARY CONSTITUENCIES: MUSICIANS. I CAN MAKE A VERY STRONG CASE THAT THE FOSTERING OF LIVE MUSIC CULTURES IN THE COMMUNITY, HOWEVER, IS A MATTER WHICH MAY BE REGARDED AS HAVING RELEVANCE TO A LARGE NUMBER OF GOVERNMENT PORTFOLIOS:

DIRECTLY:

ARTS AND ETHNIC AFFAIRS
 EDUCATION AND YOUTH AFFAIRS
 TOURISM
 COMMUNITY SERVICES
 GAMING AND RACING
 SPORT AND RECREATION

INDIRECTLY

HEALTH AND ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS
 POLICE
 THE OLYMPICS
 INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND FAIR TRADING
 THE ENVIRONMENT
 REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND RURAL AFFAIRS

I MENTION THIS IN ORDER TO DEFLECT THE SUGGESTION THAT THIS SUBMISSION SIMPLY ATTEMPTS TO DEMONISE SINGLE INDUSTRIAL AND LEGISLATIVE SECTORS. MUSIC IS A COMMUNITY RESOURCE, AND IT IS NOT CONSTRUCTIVE TO EXPECT A PUBLICAN SINGLEHANDEDLY TO BEAR ITS EXPENSE. IT IS ENCOURAGING TO REPORT THAT MY OWN REPRESENTATIONS TO THE STATE GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE JCA HAVE BEEN RECEIVED WITH PROFESSIONS OF SYMPATHY. WITH ERIC MYERS (THE NSW JAZZ CO-ORDINATOR) AND MATTHEW ELLIOTT (CO-ORDINATOR, MUSICNSW), I RECENTLY A RAISED THESE ISSUES AT

A MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PREMIER'S DEPARTMENT AND THE AUSTRALIAN HOTELS ASSOCIATION, WHICH ELICITED A STATEMENT OF SHARED CONCERN AND UNDERTAKINGS TO HELP INVESTIGATE AND ATTEMPT TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF THE DECLINE IN LIVE PUB MUSIC. THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT ONE OF SYDNEY'S GREAT CULTURAL RESOURCES IS UNDER THREAT, AND AT A CRITICAL MOMENT, AS WE APPROACH THE BIGGEST TOURIST EVENT IN OUR HISTORY. WE TRUST THAT THE PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION'S CURRENT ENQUIRY FORESHADOWS RESOURCED AND CO-ORDINATED ACTIVITY ACROSS VARIOUS GROUPS WHICH ARE PART OF THE CHAIN OF CAUSATION, INCLUDING THE MUSIC INDUSTRY, AHA, STATE AND LOCAL GOVT, BUSINESS INTERESTS, COMMUNITY GROUPS, AND WHICH GOES BEYOND EMPTY PIETIES, TO PLAN AND IMPLEMENT WAYS OF ENCOURAGING THE REVIVAL AND CONTINUING GROWTH OF LIVE MUSIC.

I REQUEST THAT THE ENQUIRY TAKE ACCOUNT OF THESE CONSIDERATIONS IN ITS DETERMINATIONS.

YOURS SINCERELY,

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR BRUCE JOHNSON, UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES
PRESIDENT, JAZZ CO-ORDINATION ASSOCIATION OF NSW
CHAIR, NATIONAL JAZZ ALLIANCE